

NINERTIMES

Student-driven news since 1947 March 12, 2025

HONORING THE

WOMEN
OF
UNC CHARLOTTE



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The Niner Times is UNC Charlotte's student-run news publication founded in 1947 and has received both state and national recognition.

We cover campus happenings, news and events in the city of Charlotte and North Carolina and topics that are important to students.

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Events to watch for on and off campus

Sisterhood in Mind, Popp-Martin
Student Union Room 261
March 12, 6:30 P.M. - 8 P.M.

Nova Literary-Arts Magazine
Gallery Reception Popp-Martin
Student Union Art Gallery
March 16, 6 - 9 P.M.

Women's Club Soccer v. NC
State NRFC Field 16
March 22, 1 - 3 P.M.

Charlotte 49ers Softball v. South
Florida
Sue M. Daughtridge Stadium
March 16, noon

Women's History Month Film
Screening: Handpainted
Animation at VisArt Video
March 20, 7 P.M.

Sister to Sister Health Seminar,
University City Regional Library
March 22, 3 - 4 P.M.

NOTES FROM THE NEWSROOM:

Stop trying to make women feel bad for the effort you want them to put in

Ava Harris | Asst. Opinion Editor



Arms weary from fixing those 'unruly' curls one too many times, red-faced from redoing the makeup that will not stop pilling, eyes welled in tears after yet another outfit change that makes her stomach look 'weird' and \$80 repeatedly wasted on nails she did not have the heart to say were all wrong.

All of this in an effort to make herself feel good, only to be met with comments like, "Those long nails look ridiculous" or "You would look so much prettier without all that makeup."

For centuries, women have carried the burdening expectation of being forever beautiful. Go to bed pretty. Wake up pretty. Never age. Always smell good. At the beach, at the gym or at home alone, you must remain attractive.

The catch is that you cannot let others see your effort or risk endless mocking in every direction.

For what seems like centuries, there has been a

societal preference for the 'natural' woman. Bare-faced with virgin hair, zero cosmetic work and whatever body type is ideal at the time, she is the perfect forever-beautiful specimen. But this woman is not, and never will be, real.

In the United States alone, women spend an average of \$2,000 to \$10,000 annually on beauty products and procedures. This includes but is not limited to, eyebrow lamination, Botox, waxing, hair dyeing and various facial and skin treatments, many of which stem from preserving or returning to youth.

Of course, likely, no one is going to Ulta Beauty with a gun to their head being forced to buy brown hair dye for those gray roots. Humans have free will and can choose whether they want to subscribe to the latest beauty fads. The issue remains that many of these things have become requirements for receiving basic decency.

Women in professional spaces are often perceived as unprofessional or unserious if they do not keep up with forms of 'extra' grooming like makeup or manicures.

This is not to mention the Eurocentricity behind the way women are expected to present themselves in the workplace, making maintenance even harder for women of color. Women who put more money and work into their appearances are seen as

being of higher value and more worthy of respect.

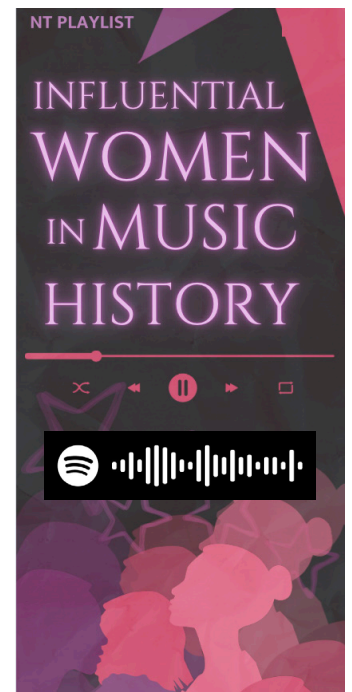
The pressure to conform to beauty standards, especially as a form of professionalism, makes the choice to steer clear of these practices feel nearly impossible. So, women typically choose to opt in, even if doing so reluctantly.

However, their male counterparts may still chalk up these efforts to some form of absurd vanity. Women seen as putting too much effort into their looks risk becoming too attractive and, therefore, untrustworthy, dumb or unserious still.

This Catch-22 is precisely the reason why it is so agonizing to have efforts to keep up appearances be diminished as frivolous and unnecessary by those who will never fully understand their incapability.

The adoration of the natural woman juxtaposed with the concept of beauty, but not too much beauty, as a prerequisite for respect puts women between a rock and a hard place. There is a perfectly narrow box women are expected to try their hardest to squeeze into, but there will always be some piece of them spilling from it.

Whether she chooses to spend thousands on maintenance or nothing at all is each individual woman's prerogative. Your opinion on her decision is the only part of this equation truly unworthy of reverence.



Dr. Bibi Reisdorf's personal mission to tackle campus period poverty

Angelina Manoj | Staff Writer

Courtesy of Bibi Reisdorf

In an effort to address menstrual equity and support student well-being, Dr. Bibi Reisdorf, an associate professor in the Department of Communication Studies at UNC Charlotte, has taken it upon herself to provide free period products in the Colvard building bathrooms for students facing period poverty.

Reisdorf's initiative began with a different kind of support: Granola bars for students who might have been skipping meals to save money for things such as rent.

However, after giving birth to her second child and returning to campus post-COVID-19, she noticed another urgent need: Access to menstrual products.

"We know about period poverty, we know about the 'Pink Tax,' and I just noticed [that there was] nowhere to get anything [period products]," said Reisdorf. "And if you didn't think about it, or you forgot, or you were being surprised about your period, what are you gonna do, right?"

This realization sparked the idea for the period product baskets. Knowing she could not tackle the entire campus at once, Reisdorf focused on the Colvard building, where she spends most of her time teaching.

"I started [the initiative]. I've gotten some donations from faculty in communications studies

nowhere, and I have nothing on me,' so it's been a really positive response," said Reisdorf.

While the initiative that Reisdorf initiated is currently limited to Colvard, she has discussed expanding it with Chancellor Sharon L. Gaber, who confirmed that the University is working to install more dispensers in various buildings over the next few years.

"I spoke to Chancellor Gaber about this as well, and she said that they are also looking at this and student organizations looking into period poverty and providing products. I think it's popping up here and there," said Reisdorf. "I think people are generally picking up the idea, or people have seen it somewhere and they are doing their own thing."

One such organization on campus is the American Medical Women's Association (AMWA) at UNC Charlotte, led by Juliet Paw, an officer who shares Reisdorf's commitment to menstrual equity.

"We help establish period dispensers here on campus and are planning to expand them to other buildings as well. We also host annual period packing events," said Paw.

The event aims to encourage people to donate and learn more about period poverty.

Students who do not know Reisdorf but saw

"[The people] I encourage [to donate] are specifically faculty and staff. Usually, students don't have a lot of money, so this is more targeted towards staff and faculty who have a little bit of disposable income to drop off period products, and if they don't want to drop off products, they can give me \$5 or something," said Reisdorf.

Reisdorf hopes to collaborate with others who share the same mission to create a broader, more sustainable initiative. The goal is to have a 'period pantry,' similar to the Jamil Niner Student Pantry, but for period products.

"I would love to collaborate with others, pool resources and have a bigger drive—it would make this a lot easier on everyone," said Reisdorf. "If there's anyone doing this that I don't know about, I'd love to put our heads together."

“Charlotte should provide free period products because everyone deserves to have basic necessities.”

- Dr. Bibi Reisdorf

here and there, but for the most part, I buy [most of] the products," said Reisdorf. "I just add them to my grocery order."

Every Tuesday morning, Reisdorf restocks the baskets with tampons and pads of various sizes, often purchasing the supplies herself. The initiative has largely been her personal effort, with the need being evident.

"Some students who just don't have the money to buy products take a few more, and that's totally fine," said Reisdorf. "By the end of the week, the baskets are empty."

The response from faculty also has been overwhelmingly positive.

"I have friends who are in the psychology department which is across the breezeway. And I have had some of them [say] 'your products saved my day because I started my period out of

the baskets in Colvard also voiced their support for this initiative.

"I thought it was really good that they [Reisdorf] were providing essential products for students given that they are sometimes expensive," said Allie Theisen, a fourth-year Charlotte student. "Charlotte should provide free period products because everyone deserves basic necessities."

For those who want to support the initiative, Reisdorf encourages faculty and staff to donate period products or contribute funds, which she then uses to purchase supplies.

Donations can be dropped off at her office or the main office of the Communication Studies department.





Charlotte's nursing program grows from 7 to 550 students, thriving as a woman-dominated field

Praghna Hemadri | Lead Writer

UNC Charlotte's School of Nursing is integral to the campus community. With a highly competitive acceptance rate and rigorous curriculum, it is one of Charlotte's most competitive, popular and female-dominated programs.

The School of Nursing was established in 1964, under the leadership of Mrs. Edith Brocker, with a class of seven students. Today, the school has over 550 students and has grown into a hub for innovative programs and healthcare partnerships.

Charlotte ranked No. 54 among the US News & World Report Best Colleges, placing it in the nation's top 10% of nursing programs.

The Charlotte School of Nursing enrollees start out in the lower-division program. After passing their introductory classes, such as human anatomy and physiology, psychology and statistics, a relatively high GPA of 3.3 and being certified as a Nurse Aide I (CNA I), students are eligible to transfer to the upper division.

Once admitted into the upper division, the School of Nursing requires numerous advanced healthcare classes such as Pharmacology in Health and Illness, Population Focused Nursing and Nursing Care of Children.

Before nursing students graduate, they must complete the nursing licensure exam (NCLEX) to become registered nurses (RNs).

For the fall semester of 2024, the School of Nursing had a 100% pass rate for the NCLEX. Dr. Susan Lynch, associate dean of the School of Nursing, explains that the reason for such high pass rates is the dedication of the faculty and students alike.

"As a result of our students and faculty dedication, we continue to have a consistently high pass rate on the NCLEX exam. We are excited to announce our December 2024 graduates had a 100% pass rate on the exam. We are so proud of everyone associated with the program," said Lynch.

Lynch believes that two major factors make the nursing program unique—the students and their dedication to be in a position where they can excel, and the dedicated faculty, who all value the students' dedication to work hard and support them just as much.

"I believe there are two major factors that make our nursing programs so special. First are our fabulous students," said Lynch. "UNC Charlotte has attracted a strong student body and our nursing students have worked and studied hard to be in a position where they excel and are highly regarded and sought after in our local job market and beyond. Second is our dedicated faculty. All the faculty are dedicated nursing professionals and highly value student success. Our faculty encourage and celebrate every student's accomplishments."

Due to the close proximity of reputable hospitals, nursing program students can gain clinical, real-world experience as they learn in traditional classes, making Charlotte's program different from other universities.

The School of Nursing takes a very hands-on approach to teaching its students, and this can only be accomplished through the involvement of hospitals such as Novant Health Presbyterian Medical Center and Atrium Health Carolinas Medical Center. The students can go on rotations

and gain clinical experience in these hospitals.

"Our faculty are dedicated to student learning, and we are lucky to have such fantastic clinical partners in the Charlotte Metro area," said Lynch.

She emphasized the importance of a well-rounded educational approach and the need to highlight how various learning strategies come together to enhance the nursing experience.

"Engagement of the student in the learning is critical," said Lynch. "This collection of learning strategies, including traditional classes with active learning, simulation experiences and clinical rotations in acute care hospitals and other community agencies, provides the environment to prepare nurses to be the best they can be for their patients and their families."

With formal training in traditional classes and in a clinical setting, the nurses trained at the Charlotte School of Nursing possess unique qualities that prepare them for the job market.

"The School of Nursing values integrity, innovation, collegiality and scholarship," said Lynch. "Students in our programs possess the following attributes and skills that make them great nurses. I would characterize them in the following ways: compassionate, critical thinkers, ethical decision makers, goal-directed and great communicators."

Due to the high number of female nurses and the stereotype of women as the designated caregivers, the field is usually seen as women-dominant. However, in 2023, 12.6% of RNs were male, compared to 7% in 2008, making the field of nursing more diverse each year.

"The good news is that every year more men enter the profession of nursing. Although the

profession continues to be more associated with women, often this is associated with cultural expectations and caregiving stereotypes that result in certain biases related to female-dominated professions like nursing," said Lynch.

As for future plans for this program, in fall 2025, the Charlotte School of Nursing is adding a new Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program, increasing its capacity to admit a greater number of family nurse practitioner (FNP) students and renovating its simulation spaces to serve more students.

"As the state of North Carolina, the UNC System and UNC Charlotte have committed to nursing workforce development, we are happy that we can expand our undergraduate and nurse practitioner programs this fall," said Lynch. "We will establish a new accelerated BSN program, increase our capacity to admit more family nurse practitioner students and renovate our simulation spaces to serve more students. The new accelerated BSN program is designed to attract students looking to change careers who have previous degrees in other fields."

Lynch encourages interested students to apply to the nursing program if they are interested in being part of something with a broad reach, helping out others and committing themselves to the wellbeing of their patients.

"We prepare nurses who demonstrate their commitment to the wellbeing and health of their patients daily," said Lynch. "Therefore, if a student wants to be part of something bigger than themselves, nursing is a profession that will bring much joy and fulfillment. What more can anyone ask for in life?"

Strength in setbacks: How women succeed in computer science at UNC Charlotte

Olivia Knott | Staff Writer

What is it like to be one of the only women in a male-dominated field? For female computer science students at UNC Charlotte, it means overcoming intimidation, proving their skills and inspiring the next generation of women in technology.

With over 4,000 students, the College of Computing and Informatics is one of Charlotte's largest colleges. However, only 18% of those students are women.

Women's experiences in computer science are often overlooked despite their importance as a minority in the field.

Female computer science students frequently feel out of place due to the predominantly male

demographic.

"For about every 10 [men], there are one to two girls. It sucks because sometimes I feel like I get surprised looks when I walk into class since I don't fit the standard of someone who looks like they would be studying computer science," said first-year student Naomi Galo-Orellana.

It is not uncommon for women majoring in computer science to feel behind compared to their peers. Overhearing conversations between male classmates about their experiences can be intimidating and make some female students feel behind.

"It is difficult to hear [men] talk about their experiences because sometimes it makes me feel

like I am behind," said Galo-Orellana.

Computer science offers a broad range of possible career paths. Outside of difficulties fitting in, there can also be challenges in deciding which career path to follow after graduating.

"Deciding the path I want to go down is hard because it is so broad. There are so many things that I want to do, and I feel like finding a job that you love and [are] good at is hard," said second-year student Sophia Fralin.

Despite challenges, female computer science students continue their studies with high hopes for the future.

"I want to inspire more Black women to get into STEM, [and] create more diversity because

it is a white-male-dominated field," said Fralin.

Many want to inspire others to pursue their dreams regardless of the discomfort. It is a unique experience to be a woman learning in a male-dominated space, but despite the difficulties, these young women feel they can make the most of their experience.

"My experience has been good. It has its ups and downs. There have been some rocky roads, but at the same time, if you like what you are doing, you are going to push through," said Fralin.

Students like Galo-Orellana have felt their passion for computer science since they were young. Galo-Orellana took a coding class in school and fell in love with it. She took an engineering course in high school, and her passion for computer science has blossomed ever since.

"I enjoyed coding, and it made me realize that this [is] something that I have always been passionate about," said Orellana.

Female students in computer science are not discouraged by the disparity in the field. They still pursue their education with as much passion and enjoyment as anyone, and they do not let anything hinder them from their goals.

"I am very proud of my identity, especially my upbringing. My parents taught me never [to] let anything bring me down," said Galo-Orellana.

Though hardships and ups and downs, the women majoring in this field remain deeply passionate about their work and are unyielding in their determination.

According to The Chronicle of Higher Education, Charlotte's College of Computing and Informatics is the Carolinas' largest and most diverse computing college. Charlotte also leads North Carolina as the university with the most female computer science graduates.

"UNC Charlotte has a great computer science program, and I never feel like I am missing out. There are [many] people here to help you as well," said Fralin.

Though they face adversity and discomfort, the women majoring in computer science are confident in their path and make the most of their experiences.

Women in computer science today have big hopes in mind and a bright future ahead. Despite the lopsided demographic, they are not hindered from pursuing their passion and hope to inspire the next generation.

"Do not feel intimidated by a male-dominated space. Success is never easy; just because it gets challenging does not mean it will not be worth it in the end. Stay focused," said second-year student Khamryn Turner.

“Do not feel intimidated by a male-dominated space. Success is never easy; just because it gets challenging does not mean it will not be worth it in the end. Stay focused.”

- Khamryn Turner, second-year



Courtesy of UNC Charlotte

Courtesy
of Karen
Popp
& UNC
Charlotte



Karen A. Popp: A legacy of leadership and dedication at UNC Charlotte

Wes Packham | Asst. Arts & Culture Editor

The Popp-Martin Student Union is undoubtedly familiar to students at UNC Charlotte, but few may know the story behind its name.

The building was partially named in honor of alumna Karen A. Popp for her time as the University's first female student body president and her distinguished legal career. Popp's journey is one of dedication, trailblazing achievements and an enduring commitment to her alma mater.

Before attending UNC Charlotte, Popp had lived in Mooresville, N.C., with her parents and two brothers. Her parents served as excellent role models, teaching her to set goals and work hard but always "give back." Her father was a successful high school, college and NFL football coach, and her mother was a community volunteer who owned several businesses in downtown Mooresville.

Popp had initially desired to attend another university before visiting UNC Charlotte in her final year of high school. Popp said that during this visit, she first fell in love with the University after spending much of the day at 'Spring Fest' on campus.

"I came on campus with a bunch of friends from high school, and I just immediately felt at home," said Popp. "I spent the whole day at Spring Fest; that evening, I went home and told my parents Charlotte is where I wanted to go to college."

Noting how beautiful the campus was to her when she toured and the proximity to uptown Charlotte, Popp believed it was the perfect place for her to attend school.

"I felt that it was a perfect place to be in college. A lot was offered on campus; it just looked like a fun place to go to school," said Popp. "Academically, it was a very good program. This concept of being a self-contained campus but not being

far from uptown Charlotte. I thought it was just wonderful."

Popp's four-year journey at UNC Charlotte began when she moved into the dorms and met her resident advisor, Nancy Davis. Popp said she was the perfect person for her to meet as a first-year, becoming one of Popp's first friendships on campus and serving as a mentor and example of student leadership to her.

This close friendship with Davis led her to become a resident advisor in her second and third years. Then-Head Coach Judy Wilkins Rose also recruited Popp as a first-year to join the women's basketball team. She was involved in other activities, including becoming a member of the campus chapter of the North Carolina Student Legislature and serving in student government.

Her extensive involvement cemented her place as one of the most well-known students on campus.

Outside of extracurriculars, Popp excelled academically and diligently focused on her studies throughout her four years at the University.

"I had great professors from day one and got into a good habit of studying," said Popp. "I ended up doing well academically, and I also did extremely well in the non-academic category. My motto was, 'I play as hard as I work,' and I worked hard."

In 1979, Popp wanted to take the next step forward in her leadership on campus by campaigning for student body president. Her objectives focused on increasing student involvement, improving student representation and reforming the student disciplinary system.

"I thought [there] were two different aspects of a student's life: academics and extracurriculars. I wanted to create opportunities for students to excel in both," said Popp.

Popp was subsequently elected following her

successful campaign. She was the first female student body president in the UNC System, the oldest university system in the country.

After being elected, Popp was determined to help and lead the change of the student disciplinary system to be student-led. She worked with Charles 'Chuck' F. Lynch, the dean of students in 1979, to turn this objective into a reality.

This student-led model became a leading example nationwide for the time and is the way many universities run their student government today.

Popp's leadership as student body president proved transformative for the University, as she spearheaded initiatives that continue to shape the campus today.

As student body president, Popp founded the Alumni Ambassador Program, now known as the Student Alumni Society, and launched the process to get honor societies Omicron Delta Kappa and Phi Kappa Phi on campus. These initiatives continue to provide leadership and networking opportunities for students today, reflecting her enduring influence on campus life.

Her election marked a significant milestone for women in leadership at UNC Charlotte and in the broader UNC System, reflecting progress in student representation.

"I truly blossomed as a person, student and leader at UNC Charlotte," said Popp. "It was just a fabulous four years that started the day I moved into the dorm my freshman year."

Though Popp originally enrolled in Charlotte as a biology major with plans to attend medical school and become a doctor, her experience on campus and involvement in student government influenced her to change her career path toward becoming a lawyer.

After graduating cum laude from UNC Charlotte, Popp went on to study law at St. Peter's Col-

lege of Oxford University in England on a Rotary International scholarship.

"I went off to Oxford [in 1980], where I was only the second class of women to be admitted [into St. Peter's College]," said Popp. "There was a very small group of women there and only two Americans at my college."

Despite Popp's discrepancies as a woman and an American at Oxford, she excelled in her studies and stayed involved in student activities. She was a member of the Oxford Law Society and rowed as a part of St. Peter's College Women's Crew.

After leaving Oxford, she attended UNC School of Law at UNC-Chapel Hill on scholarship, serving as an editor for the North Carolina Law Review and an inductee of the law honor society Order of the Coif.

"[Law school] teaches you how to think like a lawyer," said Popp. "It transforms your brain to be a lot more analytical. When you [leave] law school, you learn how to be a lawyer."

Popp started her law career by clerking for one year at the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit for The Honorable Samuel J. Ervin III. These federal clerkships are reserved for the top law students in America.

After graduating from law school, she moved to New York City and worked as a litigation associate at Sullivan & Cromwell LLP, one of the oldest law firms on Wall Street. There, she represented investment banks and Fortune 500 companies.

After spending five years at Sullivan & Cromwell, Popp worked as a federal prosecutor at the U.S. Attorney's Office. She worked on high-profile cases, including her involvement in prosecuting the Italian-American Mafia.

In 1995, Popp moved to Washington, D.C., and worked in the Office of Legal Counsel, working

on an array of matters that advised the attorney general and former President Bill Clinton. Thereafter, she became associate White House counsel to the President of the United States, joining a small group of lawyers at the White House advising the President on all legal issues.

"I've never been bored. My work has been interesting, and I've grown my entire career," said Popp. "I've been able to do first-of-their-kind matters, which allows you to be creative and pushes you as a lawyer."

Popp now works at Sidley Austin LLP, one of the largest law firms in the world, with nearly 2,000 lawyers and over 22 offices worldwide. She is a corporate white-collar defense and crisis management lawyer. She has helped to build her practice group from only a handful of lawyers in 1999 to over 200 lawyers today.

In 2024, the National Law Journal awarded Popp the Lifetime Achievement Award, given to attorneys who have made significant and lasting contributions to the legal community.

"Receiving the top award for lawyers in the National Law Journal was a real honor," said Popp. "Only a small percentage have ever received the award, and even less are women."

Popp's education has been invaluable to her and her career, crediting her time at UNC Charlotte, Oxford and UNC-Chapel Hill School of Law as all contributing to her successes.

"[It started] when I was at Charlotte. I had some great political science classes with professors like Dennis Dorin, [who] taught a Supreme Court class," said Popp. "I think that a great thing about student government and extracurriculars is that you start that process of thinking like an advocate. That was very helpful to me in pursuing a law career."

Throughout her decorated career, Popp has remained connected to the University, making regular visits back to campus.

"Part of it is giving back to an institution that gave so much to me, and part of it is paying it forward for other people," said Popp.

Popp served as chair of the UNC Charlotte Board of Trustees, leading the University's governing body from July 2013 until June 2016. Her service in this position further cemented her continued involvement, commitment and dedication to the University.

In 1997, Popp was awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award, and in 2022, UNC Charlotte awarded her an honorary Doctorate of Public Service in recognition of her service to UNC Charlotte.

Constructed in 2009, the Student Union was officially renamed the Karen A. Popp and Desmond T. Martin Student Union in 2016. It was built on the field where Popp first fell in love with UNC Charlotte.

"It's extremely humbling to be recognized by the University in such meaningful ways," said Popp. "It means a lot to me because I love Charlotte."

Many women served as mentors and strong examples to Popp during her time at Charlotte.

Davis served as a mentor to Popp during her years at Charlotte, as did Wilkins, who was a coach and mentor to Popp and a close friend to this day.

"I'm honored to be a trailblazer," said Popp. "There are trailblazers before me, trailblazers of my generation and there will be trailblazers behind me. I'm honored to be one of those."

Popp has faced challenges throughout her life and career but has persevered to become the excellent woman and role model she is today. She truly stands for what it means to be part of this University, a strong woman with a heart that is '49er Green.'

"I love Charlotte. I love what it did for me as a student and what it's doing for others. I'm very proud of our University and all we've accomplished," said Popp. "I want [UNC Charlotte] to keep doing what it's doing: growing, being an institution of excellence and an institution that our students and alumni are very proud of."

How Bonnie Cone built UNC Charlotte from the ground up

Tucker Neal | Staff Writer

Bonnie E. Cone was the extraordinary visionary who pioneered UNC Charlotte into the large, nationally recognized institution it is today. Serving as a teacher and leader in the Charlotte community for over 50 years, Cone is credited as the founder of the University. Throughout her life and career, she represented what it means to be a true 49er.

Cone was born and raised in Lodge, S.C. From a young age, she dreamed of becoming a teacher. After graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics from Coker University, she moved to Charlotte to teach at Central High School, now Garner Magnet High School. Cone later earned a Master of Arts in Mathematics from Duke University.

In 1946, she was appointed as the director of a night school in Charlotte established by the UNC system, created to help WWII veterans obtain an education. The school helped many veterans find work after the war. Thanks to her tireless efforts to expand the school, it eventually became Charlotte College, a two-year institution.

Cone was president of Charlotte College and oversaw the relocation and construction of a new campus. In 1961, the campus was moved from the basement of Central High School to the 1,000-acre plot of land where it remains today. At the time, there were only two buildings on campus.

In 1963, Cone and other board members worked together to expand the campus and transition it to an official university in the UNC system. She was dedicated to growing the college and creating new opportunities for people in Charlotte and surrounding areas. Eventually, they were acknowledged, and a bill was introduced in the North Carolina General Assembly.

"The bill was passed and set to go into effect in July 1965. We were made the fourth campus of the University of North Carolina on that marvelous

day. I was no longer hungry because on that day, my soul had been fed," said Cone in a 1987 interview.

After this outstanding accomplishment, Cone was temporarily the first acting chancellor of UNC Charlotte, the newly established UNC institution. She led the University's transition into a four-year university with a plethora of new departments. Cone also helped develop the master plan for the campus.

Cone was the voice of Charlotte as it blossomed into a diverse educational community. She was highly involved in the development of various new programs and helped the University gain national recognition. She personally oversaw the development of the Botanical Gardens and the School of Nursing.

After working as vice chancellor of student affairs and community relations, Cone retired in 1973. She continued to be fully dedicated to the operation and expansion of the University. She worked directly with students and faculty, attended many events and raised funds for the University into her 90s. She made sure to never miss a commencement.

Cone was devoted to the education of every student at Charlotte, even after retirement. She continuously encouraged and inspired students to pursue and obtain a degree. Her passion for personal development was apparent and contagious to everyone she worked with during her career.

"This institution exists to serve those that would not be served otherwise. I am still very proud of those that provide instruction and inspiration to these very special people," said Cone in a 1988 interview.

Many of Cone's closest friends and relatives say that she always kept her personal opinions private. She did not verbally express the need for change

because she was actively generating it each day. Cone never let setbacks slow her ambition—even when she was overlooked as the first chancellor.

Cone was a strong and influential leader during a time period when women had limited leadership opportunities. She was the first woman to serve as president of the Southern Association of Junior Colleges in 1959. She was also the first woman to teach on Duke University's west campus and led many civic organizations in Charlotte.

"She didn't really need to preach about women and the importance of women taking charge. She just enabled them to do that," said Genevieve Barnhart, Cone's great-niece, in a 2014 interview.

Cone's diligence and passion earned her 10 honorary degrees, as well as respect and recognition across the state for what she was able to accomplish. In 1956, she was named WBT Radio's Woman of the Year. In 1965, she won the Distinguished Citizen Award from the North Carolina District of Civitan International.

In 2003, Cone was buried in the Van Landingham Glen Gardens on campus after her death at age 95. Even now, we continue to be inspired by her determination and passion. Cone's name is honored by various awards and scholarships, and Cone University Center serves as a campus hub.

There are many other namesakes in her honor. Part of U.S. Highway 29 near campus has been named the Bonnie Cone Memorial Highway. Additionally, the Bonnie Cone Leadership Academy in Huntersville, a primary and secondary education institution, was opened in 2023.

Today, we remember Bonnie Cone as the heart of our University and as a woman who never stopped fighting for the education of all people. Each past, present and future Charlotte student is a part of her dream. She would be immensely proud of the lively, innovative community her University has become.



Courtesy of UNC Charlotte



Courtesy of PHA Executive Board

Charlotte's Panhellenic Executive Board shapes the next generation of women in Greek Life

Sofia DiStefano | News Editor

Before arriving at UNC Charlotte, Dawson Jarman, Emily Hoyle, Fontana Ross and Ava Jessup had no intention of entering the Panhellenic scene. Three years later, these women hold positions on the 2025 Panhellenic Executive Board, changing the narrative for Greek Life, especially for women.

Charlotte's Panhellenic Executive Board manages Greek Life logistics while aiming to further the Greek Life community's impact on campus.

Founded in 1902, the Panhellenic Council is comprised of 26 national and international sorority chapters. Charlotte is home to seven of those chapters.

The Board, comprised of women from seven distinct

sororities, Kappa Delta, Alpha Delta Pi, Zeta Tau Alpha, Alpha Chi Omega, Delta Zeta, Chi Omega and Kappa Alpha Theta, is dedicated to creating a positive Greek experience while shattering stereotypes associated with sorority life.

Although each is in a different chapter, they all have the same goal: providing comfort, strength and pride for all Greek Life women.

Jarman, a member of Kappa Delta, currently serves as the president of the Panhellenic Executive Board. She initially hesitated to join a sorority and did not see herself fitting in. When Jarman eventually joined, she realized what the community had to offer and never looked back.

“

“Greek Life at Charlotte is so different, and it’s so unique, and it allows you to have those more personal connections and leadership opportunities. Charlotte’s really that space where you can fail safely, but you can also grow exponentially.”

- Dawson Jarman, PHA Executive Board president



Dawson Jarman, President

"I came to college wanting nothing to do with Greek Life. I ran away from them, and now I'm president," said Jarman. "Greek Life at Charlotte is so different, it's so unique and it allows you to have those more personal connections and leadership opportunities. Charlotte's really that space where you can fail safely, but you can also grow exponentially."

Also not joining Greek Life during her first year, Ross became a member of Zeta Tau Alpha during her second year and now hopes to be a guiding light for women who are hesitant to join Greek Life.

"My freshman year, I wasn't in a sorority, and I was that outside perspective. I didn't really know what was going on. I had my own thoughts that weren't even true about Panhellenic," said Ross. "Spending my sophomore year learning why it's so great, I grew as a person and thrived in community service and making friends. Holding this leadership position that I wanted, I get to be the person who gets to show everyone else a [executive board] panel like this and advocate for it."

Executive Board members like Ross pour endless effort into the recruitment process, ensuring that every woman who wants to go Greek feels welcomed.

As the Board's executive vice president of recruitment and a member of Alpha Delta Pi, Jessup hopes that with each year of recruitment, more women will find their homes in Panhellenic.

"We're really trying to promote that every woman is a Panhellenic woman. There's no cookie-cutter type of girl that everyone's looking for," said Jessup. "Specific organizations make you feel at home because you're being yourself, and we want to promote that so everyone can find a place in Panhellenic and that it's not limited to anyone."

Despite all the work the role requires and her initial hesitancy to join, Jessup reflected positively on her journey through Greek Life.

"It's an empowering feeling, joining a sorority and making it through the recruitment process," said Jessup. "I never thought I would be sitting here with all of you guys [other Panhellenic Executive Board members] today, and I never thought I would be able to give a speech in front of the Executive Board and not pass out."

Jarman further explained that the recruitment process is no easy feat and takes much more time and preparation than some may think. During the spring 2025 semester, the board is already preparing for its fall recruitment, hoping it will be the best yet.

The Executive Board's hard work towards recruitment has certainly paid off. After COVID-19, the Panhellenic community saw a significant dip in numbers.

Following the dip, consistent effort from Executive Board members has helped Panhellenic admissions soar.

Panhellenic is one of the largest women's organizations in Charlotte, with 738 women spread across seven sororities.

Ross explained that the Panhellenic experience has helped her realize that she can hold a leadership position as a woman and show other women that they can, too, if they want to.

"It's just crazy that a lot of these 738 girls are looking up to us," said Ross. "It's cool to think that maybe there's a freshman who just joined, who wants to be in our position and hold a leadership position like us and know that they are fully capable because at one point, we were in the same position as they were, and we just tried to push ourselves every day to get where we are now."

The Executive Judicial vice president, Emily Hoyle, highlighted the importance of one of the newest roles, vice president of DEI, added to the board. Third-year Sammy Mukherjee currently holds the position, and they recently organized their first event called "Burnout to Balance."

"I don't want to speak for Sammy, but her whole thing is that people might not look the same, and that's okay," said Hoyle. "When I came to Charlotte, I didn't think I was the stereotypical sorority girl, but the whole position is for her to let everyone know they are able to join this organization, no matter what you look like, what race you are, how old you are or [where] you came from."

The collaboration event with Charlotte's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) welcomed all Panhellenic sororities and focused on student burnout and violence.

Mukherjee plans to host more events that focus on topics such as bias in recruitment and create stronger collaborations with other councils, such as the National Pan-Hellenic Council and the Diversified Greek Council.

Looking forward, the Executive Board aspires to set a better precedent for the women of Panhellenic with each passing semester.

"The biggest thing for me is changing the narrative for Greek Life here," said Jarman. "We want that first experience that the girl has with Panhellenic to be amazing and for them to love it right off the bat. As an Executive Board, [we] set the precedent for what we expect. We can start that change, even if it doesn't happen within this exact Board, because change is exponential; we want the next Board to pick up where we left off and continue to [improve] our community."



Emily Hoyle, EVP Judicial



Ava Jessup, EVP Recruitment



Fontana Ross, VP Internal & External Relations

AXΩ

**KAPPA RHO CHAPTER
OF ALPHA CHI OMEGA**

@CLTAXO

FOUNDING YEAR: 2014
NICKNAME: ALPHA CHI, A CHI O

AΔΠ

**ZETA GAMMA CHAPTER
OF ALPHA DELTA PI**

@ADPICLT

FOUNDING YEAR: 1971
NICKNAME: ADPI

XΩ

**KAPPA DELTA CHAPTER
OF CHI OMEGA**

@CHIOMEGACHARLOTTE

FOUNDING YEAR: 1982
NICKNAME: CHI O

ΔΖ

**KAPPA PHI CHAPTER
OF DELTA ZETA**

@DELTAZETACHARLOTTE

FOUNDING YEAR: 1971
NICKNAME: DZ

KΑΘ

**THETA OMICRON CHAPTER
OF KAPPA ALPHA THETA**

@THETACLT

FOUNDING YEAR: 2017
NICKNAME: THETA

KΔ

**ETA PSI CHAPTER
OF KAPPA DELTA**

@KDCHARLOTTE

FOUNDING YEAR: 2012
NICKNAME: KD

ZTA

**ETA TAU CHAPTER
OF ZETA TAU ALPHA**

@CHARLOTTEZTA

FOUNDING YEAR: 1974
NICKNAME: ZTA, ZETA



The Pretty N' Gold Majorette Team brings an energetic dance style to UNC Charlotte

Bianca Bagley | Staff Writer

Now more than ever, diverse, female-led organizations at UNC Charlotte are on the rise. Pretty N' Gold, Charlotte's Historically Black College or University (HBCU) style majorette team, is a perfect example. These talented ladies bring school spirit to the campus through halftime performances with the Pride of Niner Nation marching band, majorette-style dance music videos and collaborations with other dance and cheer teams around North Carolina.

Pretty N' Gold was founded in 2022 as a safe space for those interested in learning HBCU-style majorette dance and performing with a team at various events around campus.

"Our mission is to teach what HBCU-style majorette is, and also blend other styles of majorette and give people the opportunity to learn it that wouldn't necessarily have learned it otherwise," said fourth-year student and president of the organization, Ayanna Whitaker.

Each dancer aims to entertain and spark interest in the crowd when they perform, knowing that majorette-style dance may be unfamiliar to some students.

"There is also an educational aspect to it. They're able to not only enjoy our performance but also see what we actually do and maybe become inspired to join the team," said Demi Fanika, a fourth-year student and creative director of Pretty N' Gold. "It also creates conversation

like, 'Oh, who are they? What do they do? What is that like?' We want to bring that culture to the campus."

The dancers want to educate and entice anyone interested in learning more about majorette-style dance to audition.

Extensive majorette experience is not a requirement to audition for the team, as some current members had little to no background in the genre of dance before joining Pretty N' Gold.

"I grew up dancing, but I never did majorette, so learning the different ways of dancing was really fun to me," said Briana Smoot, a third-year student and member of Pretty N' Gold's Fundraising Outreach Committee. "I just never thought about that style of dancing, so it opened a new chapter for me."

The organization also allows the dancers to form strong connections with their teammates. It provides leadership opportunities for those interested in participating in the team's behind-the-scenes operations.

"It gave me a bigger purpose on the campus," said Fanika. "I didn't have much experience in dancing prior to college, so it taught me something new about myself and it gave me a sense of community with the girls that I've been dancing with."

The bonds forged by these dancers through their shared experiences are irreplaceable.

The team welcomes anyone interested in learning HBCU majorette-style dance, taking it upon themselves to educate potential members about the cultural significance of the style.

"As a transfer student from ECU [East Carolina University], I like seeing the culture that Pretty N' Gold brings to the campus," said Sommiya Brown, a fourth-year student and secretary of the organization. "I enjoy seeing stuff like that, as well as the dance and the unique style it brings."

With recent changes to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) policies, the dancers understand that the team's role in Charlotte's cultural landscape is significant, especially with the school being a predominantly white institution. Whitaker believes Pretty N' Gold provides another outlook into Black culture that may not have been accessible otherwise.

"The goal is to bring some type of diversity to it," said Whitaker. "In the only other styles of Black dance that are on campus, you might see African or Indigenous style dance, but nothing like American Black cultural dance, other than hip-hop, right? Majorette is a blend of jazz majorette with batons and everything, but also hip-hop and things like that going into its roots."

In times like these, members sincerely appreciate it when students support organizations like Pretty N' Gold that entertain and educate through exciting performances.

Pretty N' Gold continues to break barriers for predominantly Black organizations at Charlotte, having received multiple opportunities to perform at halftime with Charlotte's band out on the football field. They have also collaborated with Five Star Cheer, Charlotte's predominantly Black Stomp n' Shake cheer team.

This organization is hosting Charlotte's first majorette competition, "Bring It," on March 21 in Rowe 130. Teams from around the Charlotte area will be coming to compete, with judges hailing from HBCUs all over the state, such as North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University and Winston-Salem State University. The team hopes this historic event will show students on the campus what majorette-style dance is all about and even encourage potential members to audition and get involved themselves.

Pretty N' Gold inspires the Charlotte campus due to its commitment to sharing the deep roots of the majorette style in Black culture with students who otherwise may have been unaware.

"I think it's important for us to create a safe space for [majorette dance] while also respecting it and bringing it here so people have the opportunity to not only do it but also learn about it," said Whitaker.

Beth Gunter is ‘shear’ perfection as a female entrepreneur and highly acclaimed hairdresser

Ainsley Latkovic | Asst. Copy Editor

More often than not, getting a haircut feels stressful. You are putting your trust into the hands of someone holding scissors that will trim your new appearance. Luckily, UNC Charlotte students have the opportunity to get the haircut of their dreams with “Ph.D. level” hairdresser, soon-to-be published author and entrepreneur Beth Gunter.

Gunter’s story is a testament to her embodiment of doing whatever you set your mind to through her tenacity and extensive knowledge gained throughout her career.

These traits led Gunter to take action in 2023 when the previous salon owner of the Campus Salon decided to sell the space, and Gunter purchased. It has been completely rebranded into a tranquil space for all cultures and hair types through holistic services.

Gunter’s journey and love for hairstyling dates back to her childhood. At age 11, she started working at the local hair salon as the hairdresser’s assistant. Not only was this her first job, but also an escape from a rough home life.

“Growing up in a home filled with addiction and abuse [I pulled] myself out of that and [found] my way; people need to know that it is possible,” said Gunter. “Just because you come from that doesn’t mean that’s who you are.”

Despite Gunter’s rough upbringing she learned strength which helped her achieve her dreams and realized that “what I offer, my value, behind the chair and teaching is something nobody can ever take from me.”

At the beginning of her career, she felt lost, since many salons create a pressure for stylists to sign a contract and stay working there forever. Instead of following the status quo, she bounced around to acquire as much knowledge as she could, cherry-picking the best lessons and information.

After years of learning, Gunter decided to share her knowledge by obtaining an advanced teaching certification. She taught advanced classes for professionals across the country for 10 years, allowing her to learn lessons of her own, such as caring for every culture’s hair type, which she implements daily.

Throughout that decade, she achieved multiple accomplishments like receiving the Keune award for Artist of the Year, due her hard work in growing the brand throughout the U.S., along with acing the ABCH (American Board of Certified Hair Colorists), the “beauty industry’s most intensive color formulation and application testing.”

Gunter eventually decided to shift gears. She prayed about her next steps, and soon her prayer was answered.

“It [the salon] kind of fell into my lap, and I

saw an opportunity to invest,” said Gunter. “I didn’t realize I was biting off a little more than I [could] chew at first, to be totally honest, but that’s part of buying a business; you don’t know exactly what you’re buying until you get into it.”

As the new owner, she did a lot of behind the scenes work, and changes to the foreground, which included a name change. The once called Campus Salon lost its bland taste to something more relaxing; the revamped space is now known as Om Hair Salon, located on, but not affiliated with, the University.

Not only did the physical space get a makeover, but so did the staffing. Gunter is currently the only stylist and is creating an environment where hairdressers of all levels receive proper support to grow their individual brand.

Gunter provides a calming space for everyone and welcomes all walks of life through her holistic services.

An offering of the salon which contributes to this environment is a black curtain that cuts the salon into two sections. This no-show black out curtain is used for customers who wear hijab or other religious coverings to have full privacy during their service.

“We’re all these beautiful souls that are living on this Earth that should be loved equally no matter where we’re from, no matter our beliefs and I feel everyone should feel a sense of acceptance,” said Gunter. “I know with the hijabi population, a lot of those women don’t have a place to go to get their hair done and I don’t feel like that’s fair.”

Gunter is a wife, mom, entrepreneur, hairdresser and teacher. Despite everything on her plate, she was able to write a book, and is working towards publication. She knows how difficult it is to accomplish something with a full plate. With that understanding, she wants to assist others in accomplishing their dreams.

“I enjoy helping people build their brand, [and] to find their passion,” said Gunter. “To clear out the mental blocks and false beliefs and say ‘okay, this is what I really want to do,’ and pave a clear path to make it happen.”

Gunter is the true embodiment of a strong independent woman who accepts the changes of life with open arms, and helps others in their trying times. With all the life lessons, skills, tips and tricks under her belt, Gunter is a veteran of not only haircare, but education. A mantra she reminds herself and others is that, “the only person that needs to believe you can do it, is you.”



Female athletes making a difference at UNC Charlotte

Davis Cuffe | Editor-in-Chief

Courtesy of Charlotte Athletics, Gianna Cutaia & Summer Washington

Between academics, athletics and everything in between, Charlotte student-athletes rarely have time to themselves. Despite those busy schedules, these four athletes are among many who spend their time making positive ripples in the Charlotte community during their rare moments away from sports.

Gianna Cutaia

When creating a new program, character quality is as valuable as an athlete's skills or athleticism; women's lacrosse found a shining example of both characteristics in Gianna Cutaia.

The graduate defender hails from Pennsylvania State University, where she was a two-time Academic All-Big Ten athlete but only appeared 14 times for the Nittany Lions from 2020-2024 due to knee injuries.

During her time away from the field, Cutaia joined Team IMPACT, an organization that matches children facing serious illness and disability with college athletes and teams. After realizing the positive effect she was having through Team IMPACT, she became a fellow at the organization and is still involved at Charlotte.

"Opportunities like Team IMPACT remind me why I love playing lacrosse," said Cutaia. "It's about being part of something bigger than yourself and bigger than the game."

Cutaia has had a breakout year on the field in her fifth season playing college lacrosse. Cutaia leads the 49ers and is No. 3 in the American

Athletic Conference (AAC) in ground balls and caused turnovers per game.

Summer Washington

Feeling lost after a coaching change at North Carolina Central University, Washington found herself struggling with mental health in her freshman year as a hurdler. Like many other athletes, Washington felt that there was a severe lack of resources for athletes seeking mental health help.

Since transferring to Charlotte, Washington has advocated for mental health as the Black Emotions Advocate Team secretary. This student organization spreads awareness and education on Black mental health and wellness.

The junior social work major was featured on the "behindtheathlete.mh" Instagram page to share her mental health journey and frequently uses her own Instagram account to provide mental health tips for other athletes.

Not just a star advocate but a star athlete as well, the junior hurdler holds the No. 9 fastest time in school history in the 400m hurdles and is knocking on the door of another top performance as she is just 0.05 seconds away from the top 10 all-time in the 60m hurdles.

Macey Bader

Dubbed Charlotte's "It Girl," Macey Bader has embraced leadership in every aspect of her life, from soccer to student advocacy. As the vice president of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), she has used her platform to push for better mental health resources, spearheading initiatives like

the annual Mental Health Matters game.

Her passion for mental health advocacy stems from personal experience. During her freshman year, Bader struggled with the pressures of balancing school, athletics and expectations. With the help of Charlotte's support systems, she learned how to prioritize self-care. Through the SAAC, she has worked to expand awareness campaigns and ensure student-athletes know that seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

"We are in such a great school that offers so many good resources that it's not something you have to go through alone, but also it's not something to be ashamed of," said Bader.

Beyond the SAAC, Bader has extended her advocacy into brand partnerships. Through her NIL deals with companies like Piada and Shady Rays, she actively promotes discussions on wellness and self-care.

Her greatest source of inspiration comes from her late grandmother, a two-time cancer survivor and a trailblazer in STEM. Even after passing, Bader draws strength from her grandmother's resilience and support.

While Bader's advocacy defines her off the field, her competitive nature fuels her success on it. The senior forward led all 49ers in goals and started all 19 games in her past two seasons.

Millai Madison

Whether leading a Black Lives Matter protest in high school or speaking out for underrepresented athletes, Millai Madison has made it clear that her impact extends far beyond the court.

Growing up in Evansville, Ind., where she was often the only Black player on her volleyball teams, Madison often faced exclusion but learned early on to advocate for herself.

That same determination followed her through college. After three seasons at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, Madison transferred to Charlotte, drawn to the program's commitment to supporting her voice. Madison's leadership in the locker room and beyond has led to her nomination for the AVCA (American Volleyball Coaches Association) Diversity Award. This award recognizes her efforts to push for greater inclusivity in volleyball.

"I have a bigger purpose than just volleyball," said Madison. "I have a platform, a voice and an opportunity to use it for the greater good. If I can educate and help people, that's what I [will] do."

Still involved in advocacy efforts in Evansville, Madison is honoring the legacy of her late friend, Kielyn Toone, through a scholarship for young male athletes in her hometown. Each year, she works with local coaches to select a recipient who embodies Toone's spirit to ensure his impact continues.

While busy off the court, Madison has continued to be Charlotte's leader on defense. In her senior season, she appeared in 23 matches and recorded 39 blocks, proving to be a reliable force at the net.



By grace, through faith—Hannah Bradey is taking on the sports world one game at a time

Kelli Blackburn | Sports Editor



Ephesians 2:8 states in the New International Version, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.”

For Hannah Bradey, this verse is more than ink on her wrist—it is an anchor that guides her through every season of life.

In a career filled with uncertainty, her faith keeps her grounded, driving her to follow her dreams and break barriers as a woman in sports.

Whether covering Charlotte men’s basketball, or the Queen City Corndogs, Bradey is a familiar sight on the sidelines—microphone in hand, lucky pen nearby, reviewing her notes before going live. This pregame ritual steadies her nerves,

ensuring she steps into coverage with confidence.

Her journey into sports journalism has been anything but linear. Determined to make an impact in college, Bradey took on multiple roles, filming game footage, recording voice overs and creating her own segment, Niner Insider, to recap Charlotte sports.

Today, Niner Insider is a widely circulated newsletter through the Office of University Communications, keeping the Charlotte community informed on campus happenings.

Graduating from Charlotte in 2021 brought uncertainty. With sports jobs scarce in the post-COVID landscape, Bradey leaned on her faith, trusting that the right opportunity would come.

“I feel like I’ve gone through hard things where God was trying to teach me that is not in my timing. It’s always what He wants for me, that’s what’s best,” said Bradey. “That’s a lesson that I’ve continuously had to learn, and so anytime I am making a decision, or in a rough patch, I’m just like, ‘God, if this is your will for me, then we’ll do it. And if not, it’s fine. Another door will open. Or if you want to close the door, that’s fine [too].’”

That first opportunity came in Winston-Salem, N.C., where she joined Sinclair Broadcast Group as a sideline reporter, covering high school football’s Friday Night Rivals. The experience helped her land roles covering the Charlotte Knights, Queens University women’s basketball and her alma mater’s 49ers.

Today, Bradey juggles multiple roles as a freelance reporter, covering everything Charlotte sports.

“I have become so adaptable to just doing things on the fly and rolling with the punches, which is so out of character for me because I love to be in control and love to know everything that’s gonna happen,” said Bradey. “I love being in [the] action and getting the chance to interview an underdog, someone who people didn’t think was going to win. It’s always the best.”

Beyond sideline reporting, Bradey serves as an in-arena host for Wake Forest University’s men’s basketball. She also co-hosts The Highway 49 Podcast alongside Charlotte Observer Reporter Hunter Bailey and ESPN Charlotte Reporter Jeremy Grandison, featuring guests and sports stories from Charlotte.

Bradey has been uplifted by colleagues in an industry where women are often underestimated or doubted. Her experience has been largely positive despite the challenges one could face.

“Hannah has an effortless ability to make anyone feel welcome,” said Bailey. “She connects with friends and colleagues just as she does with players and coaches in postgame settings, mak-

ing the conversation easy and free-flowing.”

One of Bailey’s favorite memories of Bradey was during a 2023 Charlotte men’s basketball game against the University of Memphis. In a thrilling overtime matchup, she remained energetic and engaged through every twist and turn—a true fan at heart.

Her on-air presence resonates with audiences beyond the sidelines. Grandison recalls a moment Bradey shared with him about a young fan who approached her at a game, holding a poster that read, “Hannah Bradey, you’re my favorite person ever,” and asked for her autograph.

“The impact is not just having a favorite athlete. With Hannah, they see that even though she isn’t the one dunking the ball or making the highlight plays, she’s the one helping with the coverage of the team,” said Grandison. “When you look at her, you can see the passion she has for what she does. She’s not just going through the motions, and I think that’s apparent to other people as well.”

For Bradey, the uncertainty of freelancing has become a challenge she embraces. While she does not always know what the future holds, she finds peace in trusting the process.

“It’s hard to have peace when you literally have no idea where your life is going. But I can honestly say that when you give it to God and let Him work in your life, that He will give you the desires of your heart. I don’t think that He would plant dreams and desires if He didn’t have every intention of fulfilling it.”

One day, her future might involve standing on the sidelines at Bank of America Stadium as the Carolina Panthers’ team reporter. Or she might be spending her Saturdays on ESPN’s College GameDay, delivering coverage with the same bright smile and determination.

Regardless of where she ends up, Bradey’s passion, perseverance and faith will continue to guide her. Her journey is proof that trusting in God’s plan and staying true to yourself can open doors beyond imagination.

“I always try to remember that even in this job, you get a lot of recognition being in front of the camera—that all really doesn’t mean much to me,” said Bradey. “I think what means the most to me is knowing that I’m being a vessel for Christ in this way and that I can be an example of what it looks like to serve God and be a woman of God in front of the camera in this industry.”

For any girl or woman striving to work in a male-dominated industry, Bradey stands as a trailblazer in the Charlotte sports landscape—a testament to the power of faith, hard work and an unwavering belief in the journey ahead.



Courtesy of
Hannah Bradey

EDITORIAL:

You have earned your spot, a love letter to women in creative spaces

ACCORDING TO A STUDY PUBLISHED BY THE REUTERS INSTITUTE, ONLY 40% OF JOURNALISTS ARE WOMEN. EVEN FEWER THAN THAT, 24%, ARE EDITORS. DESPITE THESE LOW NUMBERS, WOMEN ARE ESSENTIAL IN MEDIA, JOURNALISM AND CREATIVE SPACES. THE UPHILL BATTLE TO REACH THESE SPACES CAN BE FILLED WITH SELF-DOUBT AND FRUSTRATION.

THE NINER TIMES EDITORIAL BOARD IS 72% FEMALE, SO WE REMIND YOU THIS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH THAT NO MATTER WHERE OR HOW FAR YOU CLIMBED, YOU HAVE EARNED YOUR SEAT AT THE TABLE. YOU, AS AN INDIVIDUAL, ARE PARAMOUNT TO THE CREATIVE ECOSYSTEM IN WHICH YOU INHABIT.



To young women

EMSLEY JACKSON, OPINION EDITOR

Young women in working spaces are the most creative and ambitious, and they have the most lust for life while simultaneously being one of the most discounted groups on the market.

I have never not been the youngest in my class, in my social circles or in the organizations I have engrossed myself in. Boys held back for 'sports eligibility' reasons would poke fun at me for being 13 in high school and then ask me for yesterday's homework in the same breath.

Age still matters. Being a woman, especially a young one, in the 'real world' is not much different. Years on this Earth equate to how seriously you should be taken. Men who are however many years

your senior and several IQ notches your junior would like you to remember that.

Your listening ears must be open and your mouth must be shut. Your word holds less weight because smart young women are a dime a dozen. Well, why is that? Could it be that smart young women are actually everywhere, waiting, hoping and praying that today will be the day they, too, can sit at the grownup's table? Possibly.

There are positions you deserve to fill. You have ideas that deserve to be heard and power that deserves to be witnessed. To young women everywhere, creativity cannot bloom without you. And where creativity blooms, so does hope.



To smart women

AVA HARRIS, ASST. OPINION EDITOR

From the stoic lawyer lady to the cutthroat businesswoman, intelligent women have long been 'scary.' They are too often depicted in media as cold, heartless and, above all, lonely. Little girls seeing these women should be inspired by their prowess but will more than likely get the message that they have to choose between being smart and likable.

As a young girl, I was afraid of being seen as an unrelatable know-it-all for correcting the teacher or simply doing well on a test. I have memories of girls, myself included, who were apprehensive about speaking in class for fear of looking stupid. The solution to this dilemma was docile silence. On the flip side, boys unabashedly commented on topics they knew nothing

about, never once qualifying their statements with "I could be wrong, though."

There are smart women and girls everywhere simmering in that silence, unsure if they want to be scary and right or stupid and wrong. But being smart, confident and liked are not mutually exclusive traits.

Being the most creative, most thoughtful or smartest in the room is exceptional, not something to apologize for. Those who would rather you downplay your intelligence than bolster their own need therapy, not your empathy. You practiced, studied and poured yourself into your work; you deserve to revel in the fruits of your labor.



To women changing the game

KELLI BLACKBURN, SPORTS EDITOR

Since I was a child, I have always had a heart for sports. But as many know, sports are often labeled as a ‘guy’ thing. It is the same tired question: What do women really know about sports? My whole life, I have either been called ‘one of the guys’ or had my knowledge tested—challenged on teams, players and stats, as if I had to prove I belonged.

Being involved in the sports industry, I have seen it all. Sometimes, I am the only woman in the room. I do not always get the same recognition as others when I achieve something. There is always someone who doubts me or questions my credibility.

There will always be someone who might assume I am ‘too soft’ for this industry. And if I am lucky, I might even hear something like Cam Newton’s infamous remark: “It’s funny to hear a female talk about routes.”

But let me remind you: you belong. Being the odd one out does not make you any less capable. You have put in the work. You have dedicated your time. Now, own your place.

Let this be your motivation—rewrite the playbook, push the limits and break the barriers they think we can not. We are not just a part of the game anymore—we are redefining it.



To women of color

KENDALL MAYE, A&C EDITOR

Overdramatic, independent, too much—these are just a few words that may come to mind when people think of a stereotypical Black woman. To me, the word “multifaceted” stands out the most.

As someone who works in the media, I want to change the narrative surrounding what women of color can be. We have always been put into certain boxes and expected to fit a specific mold.

When you do not fit that mold, suddenly, you are an outcast.

On many occasions, I have been told that I act ‘so white’ because of the hobbies I en-

joy, the friends I have or the way I speak.

We can be awkward and quiet or bold and expressive. Vulnerable and tired, or strong and independent. Intelligent and witty, or funny and confident.

No matter what, women of color are regarded by many as either too much or not enough. So, why would you try to win someone’s approval at the cost of watering yourself down?

Women of color are complex and multifaceted, making us unique. You have worked hard to get to where you are and belong anywhere you want to be.

To the self-critical women

SOFIA DISTEFANO, NEWS EDITOR



As an eldest daughter and someone who has always yearned for validation, the one thing I have never been able to shake is my biggest critic: Myself.

My enthusiasm for journalism has been labeled as ‘too much’ or overzealous. My love for organization is ‘bossy.’ If I speak my mind, some think I am being rude or overbearing. Yet, I am constantly told to stand up for myself and not be a doormat.

There have been journalistic flashbulb moments, like when I stood outside the United Center in Chicago, reporting live at the Democratic National Convention, feeling pride that words will never describe. There have been other moments when I was screamed at or cat-called when wearing a press pass. Despite times of self-doubt, criticism and that aching feeling of needing to be flawless, I have not quit.

At 20 years old, you think every step you

take is on display. Or that the world will end when your headband breaks during a panel in front of the editor-in-chief of the Charlotte Observer. I am here to tell you that no one really cares. You do not owe anyone anything.

Unfortunately, women have a subconscious need to never have a ‘bad day.’ However, the rain will somehow still come down and ruin that fresh blowout. That is life. But remember that as a woman, you should never stop being your authentic self.

Be the loud girl who cracks jokes all the time. Be the girl who is overly passionate about every little thing, even when others say, “It is not that big of a deal.” Be the girl who stands up for herself. Because once you find mental freedom, you will see yourself succeed and look back to tell your younger self your time will come.



To queer women

CLARE GREALEY, COPY EDITOR

As a member of the Niner Times managerial board and the head copy editor, I have had the honor of winning No. 1 at the state level for news writing, working on coverage that has won national awards and being a part of an incredible staff.

Despite this, it was incredibly nerve-wracking to write in an October edition openly talking about my sexuality. I know what I look like. I am clockable as a lesbian from a country mile. But that short piece of writing, far from the first time I disclosed my sexuality, made me feel more unabashed in my identity as a queer student journalist, proudly celebrating LGBTQ+ History Month.

That confidence is what separates a journalist from someone simply working at a newspaper. For so long, we have been told to conceal our sexuality, love relegated as a weakness. As queer women, there are stories that only we know how to tell; you must remember that a story left untold is a story hidden. You must be unafraid to be yourself, to tell the stories of those overlooked and turn any fear of what others may think into passion. Tell every story you can, and be proud of who you are.



To the women who love too much

EVE GOLDMAN, ASST. NEWS EDITOR

I see you. I am one of you. There is a profound ache that comes with loving too much. To give a love that overflows, to give until there is nothing left.

The women who stay longer than they should, hoping to receive what they give. To accept scraps of affection, romanticize them and worship them like gold.

But here is the truth you need to hear: Loving too much does not make you weak; it makes you strong and brave. You deserve people in your life who love too much right back. You deserve to be chosen, not tolerated. It is not wrong to crave connection, to crave thoughtful love. It is wrong to shrink yourself to fit into someone else’s life.

Learn to love with boundaries. Stop hoping that one day they will learn to care about you in the same ways. Learn to love yourself first. The right people will not need to be begged, ask you to shrink yourself or cause that unbearable ache. The right love will not make you love yourself less.

I promise the right loving people will find you.

Opinion: Everyone should care about women’s health

Rachel Johnson | Staff Writer

With how often members of Gen Z will proclaim “period!” after a positive event occurs, one would think the stigma surrounding the word in all contexts has disappeared. For discussions about women’s health issues, however, the term ‘period’ is a near-forbidden utterance that many believe they can only discuss while in the private presence of other women. Hushed conversations about menstruation are a testament to a greater societal problem: a lack of education about women’s health among all people.

Stigmatization of women’s health dates back to ancient Greece and Rome, where the term “wandering uterus” was used to describe period symptoms. Those with a ‘wandering uterus’ were believed to have reproductive health defects, causing many to begin attributing mental and physical strife that women with ‘wandering uterus’ experienced to their reproductive organs.

This belief persisted through many civilizations and periods, with those in the Victorian era adopting the Greek word for uterus, “hysteria,” to describe women who experienced mental and physical turmoil such as anxiety, shortness of breath and insomnia. Predictably, symptoms of ‘hysteria’ was addressed with cruel, extreme solutions such as isolation and exorcisms.

While reactions to female-specific health is-

suess are not as exaggerated today, a lack of empathy is still present. A large contributor to this is the general lack of knowledge most people have about women’s health. 62% of women aged 16-24 and 72% of men of all ages are unaware of what endometriosis, a chronic reproductive disease that affects over 190 million women globally, is. Polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), a hormonal disorder present in up to 13% of women globally, remains undiagnosed in an estimated 70% of individuals suffering from it due to insignificant awareness about PCOS-related symptoms.

Denise San-Miguel, the front office secretary and school communicator for Sun Valley High School in Indian Trail, North Carolina, believes that working closely with students and school nurses daily has exemplified why more conversations about women’s health must occur in public spaces.

“In my honest opinion, women do not have enough knowledge about women’s health. I feel all areas of women’s health can be spoken about more, specifically for younger women ages 18 and up,” said San-Miguel. “As I’ve worked in the school system, I have encountered several young women with no knowledge about their menstrual cycles and such. I believe this is a good age to begin to make them knowledgeable about several diseases and sickness that a woman can go

through as they get older.”

Conducting conversations about frequent symptoms, illnesses and disorders specific to women is the first step towards eradicating any awkwardness and disgust about these issues that have been generationally fostered across many civilizations. In the workplace, 32% of men believe discussing periods at work is inappropriate, compelling 48% of women to feel uncomfortable even mentioning period symptoms to their manager. An even greater percentage of women would feel hesitant to call out of work if their symptoms become severe.

“As a student of criminal justice, I understand the wide impact of public attitudes on women’s health, especially reproductive health,” said Ferrum College graduate student Cooper Wildman.

“In the criminal justice system, the bias further complicates how women’s health is treated in correctional facilities. Issues like menstruation, pregnancy, and menopause are often overlooked or marginalized due to gender stereotypes and prejudices,” said Wildman. “This can lead to substandard care, restricted access to necessary resources and overall lack of awareness among the general public and medical professionals.”

Caring about women’s health should be customary for everyone, and younger generations have more power than ever to spread vital in-

formation that can save lives and enable women to feel comfortable being vulnerable about the symptoms of their medical ailments.

Organizations such as the Office of Women’s Health regularly provide infographics and educational posts about women’s health that are easy to comprehend and reshare. Even as a man, proactively learning about women’s health and sharing information verbally and digitally can be vital in assisting friends, loved ones and coworkers in times of need.

“Because of my upbringing, I’ve never really run into a scenario where I wish I had more knowledge about women’s health,” said Timothy Niven, a graduate student at UNC Charlotte.

“That being said, I’ve seen countless of my male friends fumble at the topic. A baseline understanding of periods and what women actually go through during this time period can allow men to help more,” said Niven. “If one of your female friends is on her period, you [would be able to] understand what she’s going through and provide accordingly, whether it be a shopping trip or just genuine understanding.”

We must care enough about women and girls to deconstruct this stigma and allow conversations, care and research to be redirected toward the health problems they endure every day.



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